



## Mercury Section

### Green & Healthy Schools Assessment

Mercury is found in very small amounts naturally in the environment; however, it is a substance that can have some very harmful effects on human health and the environment if it is spilled or disposed of improperly. Replacing mercury-containing items such as thermometers, barometers, and thermostats with mercury-free alternatives can minimize risk to the environment and human health. This section will help you identify mercury-containing items and become familiar with the school's mercury disposal and storage practices. Once mercury is located in your school you can work to become a "mercury free school".

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Conducted By:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Reminder: Students should not handle mercury products while completing this section of the Green Schools Assessment. A teacher, principal or maintenance person should accompany students on this section of the audit.**

#### A. Science Classrooms (Chemistry, Physics, and Biology)

1. What mercury containing items are in the classrooms?

Number or Amount

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elemental Mercury    | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mercury Compounds    | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mercury Thermometers | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mercury Barometers   | _____ |
| (use caution, these may be open ended)        |       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____          | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None                 |       |

2. Where are the mercury containing items being stored? (Use Caution! Do not handle containers.)

- |   |  |                                    |
|---|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cabinet---       | <input type="checkbox"/> Locked        | <input type="checkbox"/> Unlocked  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Closet----       | <input type="checkbox"/> Locked        | <input type="checkbox"/> Unlocked  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Storage Rooms--- | <input type="checkbox"/> Locked        | <input type="checkbox"/> Unlocked  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Containers--     | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-breakable | <input type="checkbox"/> Breakable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____      |  |                                    |

3. Are all mercury items in storage contained in air-tight, non-breakable containers or double bagged with air tight "zip-loc" bags?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

If NO, please inform school staff NOT to remove the mercury from its current container. Simply over package the item so that it is air-tight and break resistant!

Green & Healthy Schools Assessment-  
Mercury Section

**B. Nurse's Office**

1. What mercury-containing items are in the nurse's office?  

Number or amount

☐ Mercury Thermometers

\_\_\_\_\_

☐ Blood Pressure Measuring Devices  
(Sphygmomanometer)

\_\_\_\_\_

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

☐ None

\_\_\_\_\_
2. Has the nurse recommended replacing mercury-containing items such as sphygmomanometers or thermometers with mercury-free alternatives?  
☐ Yes  
☐ No If not, why? \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Other**

1. Are there any mercury-containing thermostats in your school?  

Number  
\_\_\_\_\_

☐ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_

☐ No

\_\_\_\_\_

If yes, are they labeled as containing mercury?  
☐ Yes      ☐ No
2. How does your school handle "burned out" fluorescent bulbs?  
☐ Recycled  
☐ Disposed of as hazardous waste  
☐ Thrown in the trash  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
3. If recycled, what does your recycler do with these bulbs?
4. Does your school have a mercury spill kit?  
☐ Yes      ☐ No  

If yes, where is it located?
5. Does your school have a written procedure for handling mercury spills?  
☐ Yes      ☐ No
6. Has staff been trained on the dangers of mercury and how to handle spills?  
☐ Yes      ☐ No
7. Is there a designated person trained in spill control procedures for mercury?  
☐ Yes      If yes, who \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ No

Go to the following web site for directions on how to clean up mercury spills.  
<http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/eh/HlthHaz/fs/HGlgspills.htm>

Green & Healthy Schools Assessment-  
Mercury Section

8. Has there ever been a spill of mercury in your school (ie. broken thermometer)?  
☐ Yes      ☐ No

9. Has your school ever had a reported\* mercury spill?  
☐ Yes      ☐ No

If yes, what happened as a result of the spill?

**D. Curriculum and Community**

1. Does your school teach the environmental and health effects of mercury pollution as part of the curriculum?  
☐ Yes      ☐ No

If yes, in what subject is it included and at which grade levels?

2. Does your community have a mercury collection program to encourage the proper disposal and handling of mercury-containing items?  
☐ Yes      ☐ No

3. Can new mercury-containing fever thermometers be purchased at local pharmacies?  
☐ Yes      ☐ No

4. Does your community have any regulations concerning the sale or disposal/recycling of mercury containing products?  
☐ Yes      ☐ No

If yes, how are local citizens being informed about them?

\*Wisconsin Reporting Requirements: A mercury spill must be reported if it is one pound or more. If less than one pound, the spill must be reported unless the following four conditions are met:

- 1) has evaporated or been cleaned up in accordance with NR 700-726
- 2) does not adversely impact or threaten to adversely impact the air, lands, waters of the state as a single discharge, or when accumulated with past discharges
- 3) does not cause or threaten to cause chronic/acute human health impacts
- 4) does not present or threaten to present a fire or explosion or other safety hazard

Go to the following web site for a more detailed explanation of the Wisconsin Spill Reporting Requirements:

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr/spills/index.htm>

All mercury and mercury-containing items should be recycled. See the following web site for disposal and contact information <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/cea/mercury/contacts.htm>